

RALPH and NELL's Ramble to OXFORD.



I Heard much talk of Oxford town.
And fain I would go thither,
When plowing and sowing time was done,
It being gallant weather.
Vather did to it agree,
That Nell and I should go ;
But mother cry'd, That we should ride,
So we had Dobbin too.
Zo I goes unto zister Nell,
And bids her to make ready,
And put on her Zunday close,
As vine as any lady ;
'Tis a gallant day, the morning's grey,
And likely to be fair ;
Therefore make haste, and soon be lac'd,
And I'll go bait the mare.
So up upon the mare we got,
And away we rid together ;
And every body that we met,
We ask'd how far 'twas thither.
'Till at the last, when on the top
Of Chisledon we did rise,
I somewhat spy'd like steeples and cry'd,
Zooks, Nell, look yonder it is.
But when as nearer to't we came,
We zee volks infant thick ;
I heard a little bastard zay,
Look here comes country Dick.

Another bastard call'd me Ralph,
And how is't honest Joan ?
Nay Roger too, and little Sue,
And all the folks at home.

Zo we rode on and nothing said,
But looked for an alehouse ;
At last we zee a hugeous sign,
As big as any gallows.
It was Two Dogs, so in we rode,
And called for the hostler ;
Out came a lusty fellow then,
I wa'nt he was a wrestler.

Here take this horse, and set'en up,
And g'ien a lock of hay ;
For we are come to zee the town.
And tarry here all day.
Yes, Sir, said he, and call'd the maid,
That stood within the entry ;
She had us into a room as clean,
As tho' we had been gentry.

Zo we zet down, and bid them fetch
A flaggon of their beer ;
But when it come, Nell shook her head,
And zed, 'Twas plagy dear.
Zays she to me, if we stay here long,
'Twill soon make us go a begging,
For I am zare it cannot be
Zo much as old Martin's flaggon.

So we got up, and away we went,
To see the gallant town,
And at the gate we met a man
With a pitiful ragged gown :
As for his sleeves, I do believe,
That they were both torn off,
And instead of a hat he wore a cap,
'Twas a trencher cover'd with cloth.

And as we were going along the town,
I thought I had found a knife,
I stooped down to pick it up,
But was ne'er so sham'd in my life ;
For the under side was all beset,
With an arrant Christian's turd ;
The boys fell a hallowing an, April Fool !
But I zed ne'er a word.

As we went thro' a narrow lane,
One catch'd vast hold of zister,
He'd parson's close, and he didn't know us,
But fain he would have kiss'd her ;
He was so plaguy vine, but to my mind,
He look'd much like a wench ;
I up wi' my stick, and gi'en a lick.
I believe it split his trencher.

Then we went into a very vine place,
And there we went to church ;
I kneeled down to say my prayers,
And did not think any hurt :
In the middle of the prayers, just up stairs,
Was bagpipes to my thinking ;
And the folks below fell a singing too,
As tho' they had been drinking.

I did not like the doings there.
And so I took my hat ;
I didn't think they so had done,
In such a place as that.
But Nell was for staying till they had done
Because she lik'd the tunes, [playing,
For she was zure she ne'er did hear
Old Crundall play such at home.

Then we went into a vine garden,
All upon a hill ;
And just below a dial did go,
Much like a waggon wheel ;
But bigger by half, which made me laugh,
'Twas like a garden knot ;

When the sun shine bright, it went as right
As our parson's clock.

Then we went out of this vine place,
And went into another ;
Which was vorty times as vine
As any of the other :
Bless me ! our John quite all along
There's book pil'd up like mows :
Vaith Nell, I wish that my mother was here
If it was not vor the cows.

And in the middle stood two things,
As round as any ball ;
They told us 'twas the picture of
The world, the zee, and all.
And those who knew how to turn them right
And how to turn them round,
Could tell us what o'clock it was
In the world under ground.

And many more things they could tell
That was as most as strange ;
And when the sun should set and rise,
And when the moon should change,
I did not care to stand so near,
When all those things I heard ;
For I thought in my heart it was the Black
And I was a little afraid.

The sun being low then we begun
To think of going home ;
But one thing more we saw before
We got quite out of town.
We went apace, for being in haste,
For fear of being benighted ;
Two hugeous men stood strutting within,
And Nell and I was frightened.

Nell had a colour as red as a rose,
And durst not go an furdur,
They had bloody weapons in their hands,
And stood ready there for murder.
So we went back and got the mare,
And away came trotting home,
with stories enough to tell vather and mother,
And little zister Joan.

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